

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AN INITIAL APPLICATION TO OPERATE A CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL FACILITY

Please return the completed initial application, all required attachments, and the application fee of five hundred dollars, (\$500.00). The fee shall be paid by personal check, money order, or certified check, made payable to the **Treasurer of Virginia**. The application should be returned to:

Virginia Department of Social Services
Child Welfare Unit, ATTN: Application Processing
7 N. Eighth Street, 3rd floor
Richmond, VA 23219

NOTE: Do not address mail to the Treasurer of Virginia. A fee that is incorrect in amount or is made payable to other than the Treasurer of Virginia will be returned to the applicant. Otherwise, no fee will be returned or refunded for any reason. A \$15 fee will be charged for checks which must be returned to the applicant because of insufficient funds (22 VAC 40-160).

1. Upon receipt, the application will be assigned to a Licensing Specialist who will review the application to determine if it is complete. In order for an application to be complete, all required documents have must have been submitted and accepted. The assigned Licensing Specialist determines when an application is complete.
2. The assigned Licensing Specialist will contact the applicant by mail if there are questions about the application, or the application is incomplete. **While the Licensing Specialist may answer applicant questions regarding how regulations are interpreted, they are unable to provide "consulting services" to assist applicants in writing program descriptions, policies, procedures or to develop forms.** Per *General Procedures and Information for Licensure*, once notified, the applicant has 30 days to make the application complete or the application will be closed.
3. **It is important to note that the materials submitted with the initial application are not all that will be required of the applicant.** These documents comprise the application. Before a license can be issued, the applicant will be required to:
 - i. Write detailed, comprehensive policies and procedures that address all the required standards as outlined in the regulations, and
 - ii. Develop the forms that will be used in the prospective service. The Division of Licensing Programs has developed several model forms. These model forms will be provided as part of the pre-application and pre-licensure training.
4. The applicant must develop and submit policies, procedures, and forms when requested by the Licensing Specialist. The Licensing Specialist will review the completed program description, policies, procedures, and forms. In addition, they will conduct an on-site review of the facility where services will be delivered. Should revisions need to be made to policies, procedures, or forms, or if changes need to be made within the physical

environment, the specialist issues a violation notice. A violation notice cites the specific regulation that is not yet in compliance, with a brief narrative explaining why the regulation has not been met. The applicant must develop a detailed compliance plan to address all of the required corrections and submit a written description of the action taken to the Licensing Specialist by the due date. The Licensing Specialist makes the decision regarding whether the applicant is in compliance with the regulations.

5. Applicants should carefully read the regulations to determine when a written policy or procedure is required. A review guide will be provided as part of the pre-licensure training. A written policy is required when the regulation calls for a “policy”, “written documentation”, “procedure”, or “plan”. “Policy” defines *what* the plan, or guiding principle of the organization is, as related to the required regulation; “procedures” are the process (or steps) the applicant takes to ensure the policy is carried out. Procedures should answer the questions of *who*, *where* and *how* a policy will be implemented. **Policies and procedures are not the re-statement of a regulation.** Applicants may need to develop other policies to guide the delivery of services even when not required by the regulations.
6. Criminal background investigation procedures have been included with the application. Forms for requesting a search of the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry may be obtained from www.dss.virginia.gov. The *Code of Virginia* requires criminal history and central registry background checks for staff, volunteers, and applicants for licensure to determine eligibility to work with children in licensed programs. **After** the assignment of the Licensing Specialist, the applicant should contact the VDSS, Background Investigation Unit to obtain fingerprint cards for completion of these background checks and to supply the name of a background investigation contact person at the proposed facility. Ms. Angela Pearson is the Legal Assistant in that office. You can reach Ms. Pearson by calling (804) 726-7099. Background investigation requests must have submitted prior to the on-site review.
7. Once all applicable regulations have been reviewed, the licensing specialist makes a recommendation to issue or deny a license.
8. Providers may not begin service operation until they have received a license.